

Murder & Lynch Law

So accustomed are we to read details of crime, that the occurrence of such things does not shock us any longer, while reported as occurring at a distance. But now we have to speak of one of these crimes, here in our own county, which stuns and alarms our moral sensibilities. The parties to this dreadful tragedy, moved into our county from Iowa early this past spring, and settled near the Pettis county line, four miles north-west of Otterville. On Wednesday, the 14th, Thomas Goode and George McIntosh went to the residence of an old gentleman by the name of Mapes, and brutally beat him to death, and then taking his body some distance from the house into the woods, hung him by the neck to the limb of a tree. In this condition the body was found the following Friday. Louisa Mapes, wife of the murdered man, has two children, one a girl twelve years old and a boy about six. The boy is said to have given the first intimation of the perpetrators of the deed. Being questioned he said the men Thomas Goode and George McIntosh, murdered Mapes, and his mother assisted, by tying his hands when they were beating him. The whole neighborhood was greatly excited. Thomas Goode, George McIntosh, Louisa Mapes, and Thomas Bennet were arrested and tried by Justice's Court and eleven armed guards were charged to bring them to this place and commit them to jail. They started with the prisoners, but stopped nine miles north of Otterville, to stay all night. While here about sixty men made their appearance at the door of the house where the prisoners were guarded, the guard halted them, and after moment's consultation among themselves, in an undertone, the mass made a simultaneous rush for the door, caught the guard and disarmed him. They entered the room, all of them masked, extinguished the lamp light, and then took Thomas Goode and George McIntosh, and left. The next morning the bodies of these two men were discovered hanging by the neck to the limb of a tree their backs to each other, and with the same rope they used in hanging old man Mapes. The guard then brought the other two prisoners, Louisa Mapes and Thomas Bennett, to this place on Tuesday, 20th instant, and committed them to jail. What we have heard of the affair represents that the woman, Louisa Mapes, was the instigator of the murder of her husband. Thomas Bennett committed to jail with her, is a young man scarcely of age, and employed by Mapes to labor on the farm. It is said the woman first tried to bribe him to kill her husband. When the two men that did kill him, came to perpetrate the deed, they are charged with threatening the life of this young man if he would not assist them, and that he held their horses while they did the killing. That failing to get the young man to kill her husband, the woman then prevailed, with a bribe, upon her brother, George McIntosh, to do it, with the assistance of Thomas Goode. We feel no inclination to anticipate the verdict of a judicial trial of the prisoners now in jail. We can, however, express our deep regret that such a tragedy is to be recorded in our county, as we have been called on to notice, it affords us some little consolation, that these parties are not old settlers in our county. Whatever feud has led to the perpetration of this crime is a matter entirely with them alone. The excitement produced in the neighborhood where this horrible murder took place, causing the summary vengeance of an outraged and exasperated people is to be deplored. But we hear an inquiry accompany the train of

circumstances that awakes a painful responsibility even here in our midst. What is it? You ask; it is said, when these murderers were tried and ordered to be imprisoned in our county jail, that there was a serious and terrible expression of feeling in few, words and to the effect, what is the use of imprisoning criminals, where none are ever kept from escape that desire to elude justice. This reflection is certainly not desirable to any community. it signifies that crime has its aiders and abetors outside of these prison walls to the extent that prisons are places presumed to be completely within their control, to do with them as they please. If there had been fewer escapes from our fail we might censure more severely the act of wresting these murderers from their guard, to deal with them in the manner they were dealt with. Here then is illustrated a fearful responsibility, which show that the security of the people rests in fidelity to civil trusts and as citizens estimating at its proper value law and justice.

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